

MONTANA STATE DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
FEDERAL AID IN FISH RESTORATION SECTION

JOB COMPLETION REPORT
INVESTIGATIONS PROJECTS

State of Montana

Project No. F-10-R-2

Work Plan No. I

Job No. I-A

Title of Job: Appraisal of Public Lands

Abstract:

Public land survey was conducted on 149 tracts in Beaverhead, Silver Bow, Deer Lodge and Madison Counties. Of these tracts 100 were recommended for retention from sale. Water shortage from irrigation and other causes were again the main reasons for not recommending the other 27 tracts.

Objectives:

To appraise the public lands both under lease and not under lease for their value as public access to fishing waters of the State, and to present these appraisals to the Montana State Board of Land Commissioners and the U. S. Bureau of Land Management for such action by them as is appropriate to insure preservation of public access.

Techniques Used:

Each tract of public land on or near water in Beaverhead, Silver Bow, Deer Lodge, and most of Madison Counties was visited and appraisals were made as follows:

- a. Present land use
- b. The present and potential value in general terms of the body of water for fishing and recreation
- c. Value of the land as public access to the water.
- d. Present status of access to the water over each public land tract
- e. Possible conflict of present land use with proposed for public access.

Appraisal reports and recommendations were written and presented to the State Board of Land Commissioners and the Bureau of Land Management. Close contact was maintained by the project leader with the State Board of Land Commissioners and the Bureau of Land Management that their action on the appraisals and recommendations may be followed. Several tracts of public domain land were examined in scattered areas of the State at the request of the Bureau of Land Management.

Findings:

The public land survey this year was started in Beaverhead County on the Beaverhead River drainage. This survey completed Beaverhead County along with Silver Bow and Deer Lodge Counties. Madison County was completed except for a few scattered tracts. Public land in 149 tracts was examined in the area. One hundred tracts (67%) were recommended for retention and forty-nine (33%) of little value for fishing or recreation, were not so recommended. These percentages are practically the same as last year (68% recommended and 32% not recommended).

Water shortage from irrigation and other causes was again the main reasons for poor classification with stagnation and heavy silt loads being secondary reasons for rejection.

In addition a public land map of the Smith River, Meagher and Cascade Counties was prepared for the Fish and Game Department Engineer's use in opening access to Smith River.

Analysis and Recommendations:

The public land survey provides information to the State Board of Land Commissioners and the Bureau of Land Management on values of public land tracts to fishing and recreation. The Commissioner of State Lands and Investments attaches the prepared reports to the file card for each land tract of fishery value. This agreement with the Land Board withholds the land from sale. The Bureau of Land Management keeps record of our recommendations and considers them along with other information they have on land for which sale applications have been received.

The job was enlarged considerably this year by inclusion of public domain land in the survey at the request of the Bureau of Land Management.

Two men working last summer covered over twice as many tracts as the first year. Due to the large increase in paper work it is recommended that one full time man be added with two part-time men to help with summer survey work. This will provide two crews of two men each for carrying out the summer surveys.

Summary:

Public land survey was conducted on 149 tracts in Beaverhead, Silver Bow, Deer Lodge and Madison Counties. Of these tracts 67% were recommended for withholding from sale. Shortages of water from irrigation and other causes were the main reasons for not recommending the remaining 33% for withholding.

Data and Reports:

The original field records and reports are filed in the Helena office.

Prepared by Clinton G. Bishop

Approved by _____

Date May 15, 1954